Western Coalfields Ltd. (Maharashtr & Madhya Pradesh), South Easterna Coalfields Ltd. (Madhya Pradesh), North Eastern Coalfields (Assam), and Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (Orissa).

(c) The Mobile Clinics have been introduced in the Coal Companies to quickly provide necessary medical help to the employees involved in accidents in the coal mines situated at far flung areas from companies' headquarters.

Supply of coal Containing ash

717. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minster of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) why coal containing 40—45 per cent ash is being supplied to National Thermal Power Corporation

(b) whether it is a fact that there is no regular and consistent supply of coal even of this variety to NTPC power houses;

(c) why appropriate mining method is not being adopted to reduce the mixture of parting band and other foreign material in thick seam of open cast mining in various fields to reduce the ash percentage of coal, atleast to power houses in national interest; and

(d) whether the Coal Ministry is aware of the economic penalty, the country is paying on account of supply of inferior variety of coal to our power houses and industires and if so, what action Government is contemplating to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) Thermal Power stations of National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd. (NTPC) are linked to specific coal mines and their boilers are also designed for using such grades of coal as being produced from the linked mines. Besides, there is a coal supply agreement between NTPC and Coal India Limited which covers all essential parameters including quantity and quality of supplies. Hence the question of either supply of high ash coal or that of irregular supplies does not arise.

(c) and (d) In mechanised open cast mining, the mine plan generaly provides for separation of bands which are thick enough to be extracted separately depending on the bucket size of the machine, thickness of the band, thickness of the coal seam and other related geo-mining parameters. In large scale operations in opencast mining bands which are erratic, thin and inconsistent get excavated along with coal . Manual segregation of such band/stone/shale pieces is not feasible. The overall quality can be improved only by beneficiation. As per accepted policy all coals to be supplied to new power stations located over 1000 kms. away from the source should be beneficiated. Since consuming power stations would be the main beneficiaries of benefits accruing from washed coal they should come forward and agree to pay washing charges. As a step forward in this direction, Government has sanctioned three projects for setting up of non-coking coal washeries at Bina (Singrauli Coalfield), Piparwar (North Karanpura Coalfied) and Kalinga (Talcher Coalfield). In order to further promote coal washing on large scale private promoters are also being invited to set up washeries under "Build-Own-Operate" scheme.

Performance of coal companies

718. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reviewed the performance of various coal companies;